

Gemeinde und der einzelnen Christen ausdrücken kann. Die vielfältigen Varianten von Gottesdiensten für Suchende könnten dies in vielen kulturellen Kontexten Deutschlands unterstützen. Und Milieuforschung könne beträchtlich dazu beitragen, Nichtchristen zu verstehen und den sozio-psychologischen Kontext einer Ortsgemeinde zu exegisieren. Dafür liegt mit diesem Buch ein hervorragendes Hilfsmittel vor, dem eine weite Verbreitung zu wünschen ist.

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The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century

Brian J. Grim and Roger Finke

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SUMMARY

Two American researchers present an excellent overview of the presence and absence of freedom of religion worldwide. They refute Samuel Huntington's theory that a clash of (religious) cultures is a cause of civil unrest. It appears that in most countries there is no true freedom of religion. Muslim countries have the worst record.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die beiden amerikanischen Wissenschaftler präsentieren eine ausgezeichnete Studie über religiöse Freiheit und Unfreiheit weltweit. Sie weisen die These Samuel Huntingtons zurück, dass ein Aufeinanderprallen von (religiösen) Kulturen die Ursache für zivile Unruhen darstellt. Es scheint so zu sein, dass die meisten Länder keine wirkliche Religionsfreiheit kennen. Muslimische Länder schneiden dabei am schlechtesten ab.

RÉSUMÉ

Deux chercheurs américains livrent un excellent tour d'horizon montrant le respect ou le non respect de la liberté de religion dans les diverses parties du monde. Ils réfutent la théorie de Samuel Huntington selon laquelle le choc des cultures (religieuses) serait une des causes des troubles de l'ordre public. Il apparaît qu'une réelle liberté de religion fait défaut dans la plupart des pays. Les pays musulmans sont les plus mauvais de la classe.

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This is perhaps the best and most important publication on the topic of religious freedom to appear in recent years. Two statisticians of religion, Brian J. Grim, known as the head researcher of the study 'Global Restrictions on Religion' of the American Pew Forum (<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=491>), and Roger Finke, a professor of sociology and director of Religion Data

Archives, show that religious freedom contributes to peace and stability within a society and does not endanger it. Their basic thesis, supported by a wealth of examples, statistics and investigation, is simple: In countries with religious freedom there is much more social peace than in countries without it. In other words, the argument of many countries with a dominating majority religion, that they have to keep a check on smaller religions for the sake of social peace, is contradicted by reality. Restriction of religious freedom is often the reason for violent conflicts (67). Religious homogeneity does not guarantee freedom from conflict and it apparently encourages tensions.

Particularly noticeable is the study of Samuel Huntington's theory which assumes that violence and unrest are the consequences of a clash of civilizations. This thesis, according to the authors, does not do justice to the internal diversity found within religions and cultures (62-68), for instance the tension between Sunnites and Shiites within Islam. All available figures contradict the thesis that it is the tension between cultures which can cause civil tensions (77-82). It is rather in a certain sense the suppression of these tensions in favour of an alleged monoculture in a country which intensifies the tensions.

Of 143 countries, between the middle of 2000 and the middle of 2007 there were 123 countries (86%) in which people experienced violence or were forced to move on the basis of their religious affiliation ('physically abused or displaced', 18). In 25 countries more than 10,000 people were affected (20), noticeably among them many Islamic countries. As documented by Grim and Finke, religious freedom increased in Christian countries in the sixty years from 1945 to 2005 but decreased in Islamic countries (172). This means that overall there is less religious freedom in Islamic countries than there was a century ago – and the development still remains regressive! In Islamic countries, hardly any of which has religious freedom, the level of violence and the propensity towards civil war is very high (160-201). Terrorist movements predominantly come from countries without religious freedom (198). In a few exceptions much less damage is caused in their own countries and they are not active internationally but nationally.

Specifically portrayed in the book among the free countries are Japan (much religious freedom), Brazil (religious freedom with some tension) and Nigeria (religiously split country). Among the countries that are not free one finds China (religion as a threat), India (religion as a social monopoly) and Iran (religion as a social and political monopoly). This excellent book is proof of the fact that research on the topic of religious freedom is proceeding with more fervour, and it sets a standard for the future.

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